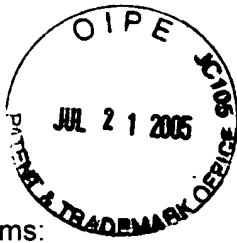


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Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims replaces all previous versions, and listings, of the claims in this application.

Listing of the Claims:

Claim 1 (canceled).

Claim 2 (canceled).

Claim 3 (previously presented). A linear compression latch according to claim 8 wherein the first path is linear.

Claim 4 (canceled).

Claim 5 (previously presented). A linear compression latch according to claim 8 wherein the second path is linear.

Claim 6 (original). A linear compression latch according to claim 5 further comprising a carriage, the carriage being mounted for linear motion within the housing, the pawl being mounted within the carriage.

Claim 7 (original). A linear compression latch according to claim 6 further comprising connection means for rotatably connecting the lever handle and the pawl.

Claim 8 (previously presented). A linear compression latch comprising:

 a housing;

 a lever handle rotatable by an operator between a first position and a second position, the lever handle being mounted in the housing;

 a pawl mounted for substantially linear motion, the pawl being actuated by rotation of the lever handle and traveling substantially linearly between an open position to a closed position as the lever handle is rotated between the first position to second position;

 wherein the pawl is mounted to travel between the open position along a first path and an intermediate position; and

wherein the pawl is mounted to travel in a second path in a direction substantially perpendicular to the first path between the intermediate position and the closed position.

Claim 9 (new). A linear compression latch comprising:

 a housing;

 a lever handle rotatable by an operator between a first position and a second position, the lever handle being mounted in the housing;

 a pawl mounted for substantially linear motion, the pawl being actuated by rotation of the lever handle and traveling substantially linearly between an open position to a closed position as the lever handle is rotated between the first position to second position;

 wherein the pawl is mounted to travel between the open position along a first path and an intermediate position; and

 wherein the pawl is mounted to travel in a second path in an upward direction substantially perpendicular to the first path between the intermediate position and the closed position.

Claim 10 (new). A linear compression latch according to claim 9 wherein the first path is linear.

Claim 11 (new). A linear compression latch according to claim 9 wherein the second path is linear.

Claim 12 (new). A linear compression latch according to claim 11 further comprising a carriage, the carriage being mounted for linear motion within the housing, the pawl being mounted within the carriage.

Claim 13 (new). A linear compression latch according to claim 12 further comprising connection means for rotatably connecting the lever handle and the pawl.